Israel becoming 'safe haven for pedophiles' with laws that allow any Jews to legally return, activists claim

Jewish Community Watch says 32 pedophiles moved from countries around the world to Israel over past decade

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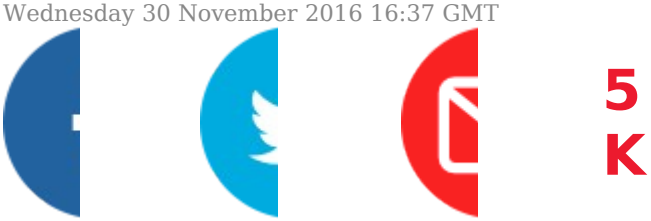

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Libel court proceedings began in Jerusalem last week *David Silverman/Getty*

Activists fear Israel is becoming a safe haven for pedophiles thanks to the country's unique Law of Return for the world's Jewish people.

A Jewish person from anywhere across the globe can be fast-tracked for citizenship in Israel, as well as their spouse, children and grandchildren.

An 1954 amendment to the law bans "a person with a criminal past, likely to endanger public welfare" but campaigners say sex abusers are slipping through the net.

"Israel is becoming a safe haven for paedophiles due to the unique opportunity available to all Jews from anywhere in the world to immigrate there," said child abuse survivor Manny Waks, founder of child sex abuse advocacy group Kol V'Oz, speaking to *The Independent*.

"This provides a relatively efficient and effective way to evade justice from other countries. It also provides a sanctuary to those who have already been convicted.

”It's important to note that while there are some criminal background checks as part of the immigration process, there are multiple ways to overcome this requirement."

Jewish Community Watch says that 32 pedophiles in their database have moved from countries around the world to Israel over the past decade.
It says 12 Jewish paedophiles, from across the globe, have moved to countries other than Israel.

“Education of this issue in the Haredi world is lacking. There are serious shortfalls,” Mr Waks, from Melbourne, told the *Times of Israel*. “They bring teachers in and out of yeshivas without doing checks.
“The Israeli government needs to look at this issue to address it, because it is an injustice to the victims and a danger to Israeli children.”

A text message was reportedly circulated throughout Ramot (a settlement regarded as illegal by the international community since it is built partly in East Jerusalem), reporting that a Level 2 sex offender was moving to the area in November.

The convict escaped arrest by New York police to Israel via Canada in 2007 and was charged in his absence with eight counts of sexual intercourse with two 13-year-old children.
He was reportedly extradited and convicted in 2009 but released in February 2012.

“People have a right, after they serve their time, to live their life,” said Jewish Community Watch Israel operations coordinator Shana Aronson.

“But the community has a right to know who they are. They shouldn’t be vilified any more than is necessary to protect the community.

“But nothing is more devastating than a repeat offender. It’s infuriating. It could have been prevented.”

But the methods employed by activists has caused controversy, with the Jerusalem District Court hearing, on Thursday, 17 November, of Yona Weinberg's libel lawsuit against activist Yakov Horowitz.
Mr Weinberg, from Brooklyn, New York, who moved to Israel after sex offence convictions, is accusing Mr Horowitz of slander and libel for a tweet he published last year following Mr Weinberg's move to Israel.

The Law of Return allows Jews living outside the country, other than those with "a criminal past, likely to endanger public welfare", to live in Israel

"I really genuinely understand and respect that there is great reluctance to tinker with the Law of Return," said Mr Horowitz.

"The Law of Return is a beautiful concept, it's really part of the DNA of the Jewish state. There's a feeling that if you amend it for sex offenders, what about someone who did domestic violence? Or a Ponzi scheme? Where do you draw the line?"

But he added that in his opinion "at the very least, the [sex offenders] should be supervised if you're letting them in".

Avi Mayer, spokesman for the Jewish Agency, which brings Jews into Israel, reportedly said that approval for a convicted criminal's visa depends on "the nature of the crime, when it was committed, and what has transpired in the interim".

Mr Mayer also told *The Independent*: "A convicted sex offender would certainly be [barred from the Law of Return] and would thus be prevented from immigrating to the country.
"In the rare event that a person ineligible to immigrate under the above provision is nevertheless granted citizenship on an irregular basis, the law enables any individual who considers him, or herself, adversely affected by such a decision to appeal it before the relevant authorities."

* Update. This article originally included a suggestion that paedophihles could potentially enter Israel as tourists, then "stay indefinitely". This is not the case. If a person wishes to remain in Israel indefinitely they must apply for residency

status or citizenship and would therefore have to submit to background criminal checks. 2/12/16

The article is saying they don't care who comes in thanks to the law of safe return. They aren't even supervised. This article also talks about the danger of Israeli students, I imply from this that they do not care if someone molested a non Jew since that is what is highlighted for concern and is not mentioned at all.